

Flash Flooding Associated with Severe Weather

Flash floods can be potential killers and are associated with thunderstorms and even tornado outbreaks. In Missouri, flash flooding caused one death in 2003, three deaths and seven injuries in 2002, and three deaths and six injuries in 2001.

A Flash Flood Watch is issued when the National Weather Service expects rainfall to be heavy enough to produce flash flooding. The amount of rainfall needed to produce flash flooding is dependent on several factors. The most important of these are terrain, wetness of the soil and the stages of the affected rivers or streams.

A Flash Flood Warning is issued when flash flooding is imminent or already in progress. If you are in its path, move to higher ground immediately.

Thunderstorms may produce flash floods. Stay out of dry creek beds during thunderstorms. If you live near a river or stream, listen for flash flood warnings.

Flash Flood Safety Tips

- Make a photo inventory of your home or business and all contents for insurance purposes BEFORE severe spring weather comes to Missouri.
- Be aware of weather conditions and be prepared to evacuate if emergency personnel tell you to leave your home or business immediately.
- Be especially cautious at night. It's harder to recognize the danger then.
- Watch for rising water levels.
- Don't try to race a flood on foot. If you see or hear it, immediately move to higher ground.
- Don't try to drive through flooded areas. Abandon your vehicle if water begins to rise over the road, and head for higher ground.
- In flood prone areas, buy flood insurance. Keep sandbags, plywood, plastic sheeting, lumber, and shovels on hand to protect your home.
- Stay away from downed power lines; they may land in flooded streets. Last summer, a Louisiana family of four was electrocuted when they tried to save the family dog that jumped into a flooded street with downed power lines in their front yard.